

A Consumer's Directory of Postal Services and Products

Issue 837



Introduction

The best possible mail service: that's what we, the people of the U.S. Postal Service, are committed to delivering to you, our customer.

For us to continue to meet that commitment, we believe it is important for customers to be aware of the many services and products available from the Postal Service and to understand how to use them.

As this Consumer's Directory will show, there is a lot more to us than just stamps. Getting to know the wide variety of options the Postal Service offers will help you choose the right service to meet your particular needs and save you time and money.

What To Do When You Have a Postal Problem

When you have a problem with your mail service, complete a Form 4314-C, *Consumer Service Card*, available from letter carriers and at post offices. This will help your postmaster respond to your problem. If you wish to telephone a complaint, a postal employee will fill out the card for you.

The Consumer Advocate represents consumers at the top management level in the Postal Service. If your postal problems cannot be solved by your local post office, write the Consumer Advocate. The staff stands ready to serve you. Just write to:

**CONSUMER ADVOCATE
US POSTAL SERVICE
WASHINGTON DC 20260-6320**

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2 Cluster Boxes/Central Point Service

The Postal Service offers two delivery options for new residential areas. These options are: (1) delivery to the customer's mailbox located at the curblane; or (2) centralized delivery.

Centralized delivery is made to groups or clusters of delivery receptacles for several addresses at one delivery point. Using this delivery system, carriers can serve customers quicker and at less cost than if the receptacles were separately located. Many people are familiar with examples of this kind of service such as post office boxes, apartment mail receptacles, and several mailboxes grouped together on single posts.

We also provide centralized delivery through another method that we call Neighborhood Delivery and Collection Box Units (NDCBUs). With this service, customers enjoy greater mail security because each customer compartment is locked. Convenience is increased because regular collection of outgoing mail is made, and parcel lockers, where needed, can save trips to the post office. In addition, NDCBUs generally are more aesthetic than groups of curblane boxes.

Delivery Service

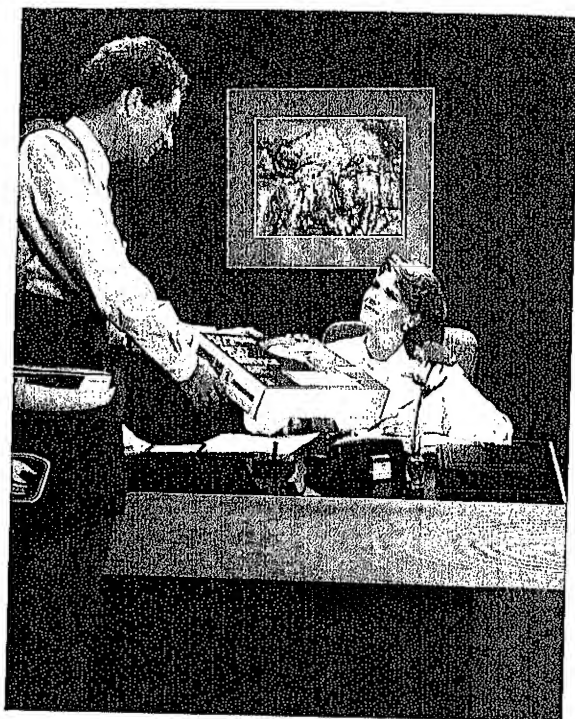
City and rural delivery services are provided from many post offices if certain conditions are met. Generally, for rural delivery, roads must be passable year-round; mailboxes must be on the right-hand side of the road on the carrier's line of travel; and extensions of delivery routes must serve at least one family for each mile of carrier travel. Areas to be served by city delivery must have paved or improved streets; street signs and house numbers displayed; and 50 percent of the building lots improved with residences or other structures.

For additional information, call or visit your local post office.

Express Mail Service

Express Mail service, our fastest service, provides several options for both private and business customers who require overnight delivery of letters and packages. To use Express Mail Next Day Service, take your shipment to any designated Express Mail post office by 5 p.m., or





FIRST CLASS

other acceptance time authorized by the local postmaster, or deposit it in an Express Mail collection box. Your mailing will be delivered to the addressee by 3 p.m. the next day (weekends and holidays included), or it can be picked up at the destination post office as early as 10 a.m. of the next day the office is open for business. Destinations which can be reached overnight from your city may be checked by using the *Express Mail Next Day Service Network Directory*. If you don't have a copy, ask your post office to check the destination for you.

This service comes with a money-back postage guarantee (see * below) and shipments are insured against loss, damage, or rifling at no additional cost. Merchandise is insured up to \$500, except for negotiable items, currency, or bullion, in which cases indemnity is limited to \$15.

Additional Express Mail services available include Same Day Airport Service, Express Mail Custom Designed Service, and Express Mail International Service. Call or visit your post office for additional details.

*100% refund of Express Mail postage upon application at origin post office if an article mailed by 5 p.m. (or other acceptance times authorized by the local postmaster) at an Express Mail acceptance post office is not available for pickup at a destination Express Mail post office by 10 a.m. the next business day; or delivery is not attempted by 3 p.m. of the next day (unless delayed by strike or work stoppage).

First-Class Mail

You use First-Class Mail for letters, post cards, postal cards, greeting cards, personal notes, and for sending checks and money orders. First-Class Mail mailed within the customs territory of the United States may not be opened without a federal search warrant. All First-Class Mail receives expeditious handling and transportation. If your First-Class Mail is not letter size, make sure it is marked "First Class" or use a green-bordered large envelope.

First-Class Mail generally will be delivered overnight locally and to certain designated areas if properly addressed (including 5-digit ZIP Code) and deposited in time for the 5 p.m. collection. The designated overnight delivery

- 6 area is dependent on transportation accessibility and scheduling. Second-day delivery is scheduled for locally designated states nationwide to which transportation is available for consistent achievement of 2-day delivery. Third-day delivery is scheduled for all remaining outlying areas nationwide.

Note: These service standards are goals which we strive to meet; however, we cannot guarantee that all First-Class Mail will be delivered within the time frames described.

Forwarding Mail

Before you move, get a Notice 8A, *Change of Address Kit*, at no charge from your post office and promptly notify your post office, correspondents, and publishers of your new address. Whenever possible, you should notify them at least 1 month before your move. Be sure the effective date of the change is on the notification forms and includes the correct ZIP Code for your new address. If your new address includes an apartment number, be sure to include this information, as this is an essential part of your new address.



First-Class Mail is forwarded at no charge. Magazines, newspapers and other second-class mail are forwarded at no charge for 60 days from the effective date of a change-of-address order. Your post office has information about holding mail, temporary changes of address, and forwarding and return of other classes of mail.

Fourth-Class Mail (Parcel Post)

Use this service for packages weighing 1 pound or more. (If First-Class Mail is enclosed or attached, First-Class postage must be paid for the enclosure or attachment unless exempted by postal regulations.) Packages mailed in the continental United States can weigh up to 70 pounds and measure up to 108 inches in length and girth combined. Your post office also has information about special mailing rates for books, catalogs, and international mailings.

For faster delivery of parcels, use Priority Mail or Express Mail service.



8 Mailgram Service

Mailgram service is an electronic message service offered by Western Union which provides next-day Postal Service delivery for messages you send to any address in the United States. The messages are transmitted for delivery with the next business day's mail. Mailgram service is also available for Canadian addresses. You can send Mailgram messages in one of several ways. You can call Western Union and dictate your message to the Western Union operator, or you can use your office Telex or TWX. For more information, call Western Union Telegraph Company. In Hawaii, call your local post office for information on how to send a message. In Alaska, call Alascom, Inc., for Mailgram service. (Mailgram is a registered trademark of Western Union Corporation.)

Priority Mail

Priority Mail is First-Class Mail weighing more than 12 ounces. Use it when 2- to 3-day service is desired. The maximum weight for Priority Mail is 70 pounds, and the maximum size is 108 inches in length and girth combined. When sending Priority Mail, use the free Priority Mail stickers available from your local post office.



Second-Class Mail

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Only publishers and registered news agents who have been authorized second-class mailing privileges may mail at the second-class pound rates. The applicable single piece third-class rate or fourth-class rate must be paid on copies of second-class magazines and newspapers mailed by the general public. Call or visit your post office for additional information.

Third-Class Mail

Third-Class mail, also referred to as bulk business mail, may be sent by anyone but is used most often by large mailers. This class includes printed material and merchandise parcels weighing less than 16 ounces. There are two rate structures for this class: for a single piece and bulk mail. Many community organizations and businesses find it economical to use the bulk rates. Also, individuals may use third-class mail for mailing lightweight parcels. Your post office has information on what category of third-class mail is best suited to your needs.

If faster service is needed, use First-Class Mail, Priority Mail or Express Mail.



THIRD CLASS

10 Addressing Mail

All mail needs a delivery address and should also have a return address. The following information is recommended in the sequence and position indicated for addressing:

A. Return Address:

1. Sender's name.
2. Sender's street address, post office box number, or rural route number and box number. If mail is from a multi-unit complex or apartment building, place the room or apartment number to the right of the street address.
3. Sender's city, state, and ZIP Code.

B. Destination Address:

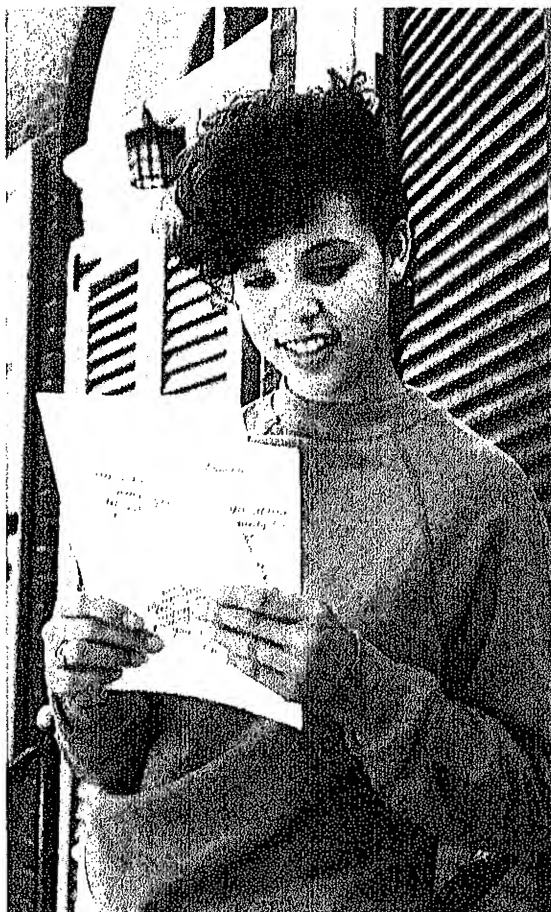
1. Recipient's name.
2. Recipient's street address, post office box number, or rural route number and box number. If mail is to a multi-unit complex or apartment building, place the room or apartment number to the right of the street address.
3. Recipient's city, state, and ZIP Code.

You will get the best possible service if you:

1. Capitalize everything in the address.
2. Use common abbreviations found in Publication 65, **National Five-Digit ZIP Code and Post Office Directory**, available in post office lobbies.
3. Eliminate all punctuation.
4. Use the 2-letter state abbreviations found in this directory (see page 12) or Publication 65.
5. Use ZIP Codes.

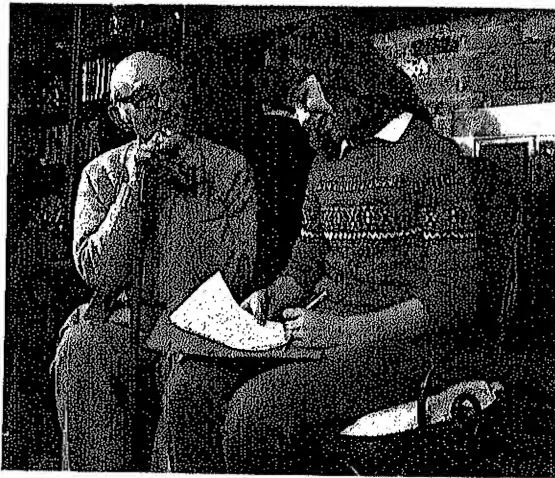
When both a post office box number and a street address are used, make sure the place where you want the mail delivered appears on the line immediately above the city, state, and ZIP Code line and that the ZIP Code or ZIP + 4 code corresponds to that address. For example:

GRAND PRODUCTS INC
475 L'ENFANT PLAZA SW
PO BOX 320 (mail will be delivered here)
WASHINGTON DC 20260-6320



12 Below is a list of 2-letter state abbreviations
for easy reference:

Alabama.....	AL	Nebraska.....	NE
Alaska.....	AK	Nevada.....	NV
Arizona.....	AZ	New Hampshire.....	NH
Arkansas.....	AR	New Jersey.....	NJ
American Samoa.....	AS	New Mexico.....	NM
California.....	CA	New York.....	NY
Colorado.....	CO	North Carolina.....	NC
Connecticut.....	CT	North Dakota.....	ND
Delaware.....	DE	No. Mariana Islands ..	CM
Dist. of Columbia.....	DC	Ohio.....	OH
Florida.....	FL	Oklahoma.....	OK
Georgia.....	GA	Oregon.....	OR
Guam.....	GU	Pennsylvania.....	PA
Hawaii.....	HI	Puerto Rico.....	PR
Idaho.....	ID	Rhode Island.....	RI
Illinois.....	IL	South Carolina.....	SC
Indiana.....	IN	South Dakota.....	SD
Iowa.....	IA	Tennessee.....	TN
Kansas.....	KS	Trust Territory.....	TT
Kentucky.....	KY	Texas.....	TX
Louisiana.....	LA	Utah.....	UT
Maine.....	ME	Vermont.....	VT
Maryland.....	MD	Virginia.....	VA
Massachusetts.....	MA	Virgin Islands.....	VI
Michigan.....	MI	Washington.....	WA
Minnesota.....	MN	West Virginia.....	WV
Mississippi.....	MS	Wisconsin.....	WI
Missouri.....	MO	Wyoming.....	WY
Montana.....	MT		



Pieces that are $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch or less in thickness will be mailable only if they are:

1. Rectangular in shape.
2. At least $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches high.
3. At least 5 inches long.
4. At least .007 of an inch thick (about the thickness of a postal card).

Any mail not meeting these standards will be returned to the sender.

Items such as keys and identification devices are not subject to this minimum standard.

Nonstandard-Size Mail

The following material is considered nonstandard mail: domestic First-Class Mail weighing one ounce or less and single-piece third-class mail weighing 2 ounces or less which:

Exceeds any of the following:

- ☐ Height $6\frac{1}{4}$ inches, or
- ☐ Length $11\frac{1}{2}$ inches, or
- ☐ Thickness $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch, or
- ☐ *Its aspect ratio does not fall between 1 to 1.3 and 1 to 2.5 inclusive.



- 14 The same criteria also apply to international letters and items of regular printed matter weighing 1 ounce or less.

We assess a surcharge, in addition to the applicable postage and fees, on each piece of nonstandard mail.

*To determine if a mail piece is within the proper aspect ratio, divide the length of the piece by its height. If the result is between 1.3 and 2.5, the piece is within the standard aspect ratio range.

Packaging and Addressing Parcels

Proper packaging and addressing of parcels is the best way to prevent parcel damage and loss. Use a container strong enough to protect contents during handling. Cushion the contents to make sure they do not move within the container and affix the address information to the contents (if possible) or place loose inside the container. Pressure-sensitive filament or reinforced tape is recommended for closing and reinforcing the flaps and seams. Avoid using wrapping paper. The use of string could cause damage in processing.

Be sure the address is legibly written on one side only.

You can get a free copy of the brochures, Publication 2, *Packaging for Mailing*, and Publication 227, *How to Prepare and Wrap Packages*, from your local post office.





Cash Receipts

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Customers needing to verify payment of postage and other services are entitled to cash receipts. Ask for a *Cash Receipt*.

Certificate of Mailing

A certificate of mailing may be what you want if you only need a receipt showing evidence of mailing. It does not provide insurance coverage for loss or damage. Your post office will endorse a certificate of mailing receipt for a fee. No record is maintained at the post office.

Certified Mail

Certified mail provides you with a mailing receipt, and a record of delivery is maintained at the recipient's post office. A return receipt to provide the sender with proof of delivery can be obtained for an additional fee. For valuables and irreplaceable items, use insured or registered mail. (See pages 18 and 20.) Certified mail service is available only for First-Class Mail items.

Claims

If your insured, registered, COD, or Express Mail article has been lost or damaged, an indemnity claim can be filed. The required claim forms can be picked up at your local post office. There are specific procedures that must be followed in the filing of claims. These procedures will be explained to you by your local post office or you can get a copy of Publication 122, *Customer Guide to Filing Indemnity Claims on Domestic Mail*, from your post office.

Collect-on-Delivery (COD) Service

Use COD service when you want to collect for merchandise when it is delivered to the addressee. COD service may be used for merchandise sent by parcel post, First-Class Mail, or third-class mail. The merchandise must have been ordered by the addressee.

Fees charged for this service include insurance protection against loss or damage. COD items also may be sent as registered mail. COD service is limited, however, to items valued at maximum of \$500. This service is not available for international mail.

You can buy insurance up to \$500 for third- and fourth-class mail. It is also available for merchandise mailed at the Priority Mail or First-Class Mail rates. For articles insured for more than \$25, a receipt of delivery is signed by recipient and filed at the delivery post office. (Send irreplaceable articles, regardless of value, and all items of more than \$500 value, by registered mail for greater security. See page 20.) Indemnity will not be paid for spoilage of perishable items. The amount of indemnity paid for loss will be the actual value, less depreciation, and no payments are made for sentimental or consequential losses. Call or visit your post office for information on other circumstances in which payment will not be made. Also, see the insurance provisions for Express Mail service, page 2.

Merchandise Return Service

Merchandise return service is available to *business shippers* through a special permit available from their serving post office. The service enables you, the recipient of merchandise from these shippers, to return a parcel and have the postage paid by the original sender. Under this arrangement, the shipper would provide you with a special label (and instructions) to attach to the returning parcel. Apply this label to the parcel and deposit it at a post office or other mailing point designated by the Postal Service. Remember, unless the postage payment is provided for by the shipper, either through an endorsement or with a merchandise return service label, you must pay the required postage charges.

Money Orders

Do not send cash through the mail. Money orders are a safe way to send money. You can buy domestic money orders at all post offices in amounts up to \$700. If your money order is lost or stolen, present your customer receipt and it can be replaced. You can obtain copies of paid money orders for 2 years after the date they are paid.



20 **Registered Mail**

The registered mail system is designed to provide added protection for valuable and important mail. Postal insurance may be purchased, at the option of the mailer, to cover articles valued at the time of mailing up to \$25,000. Registered mail is the most secure service the Postal Service offers. It incorporates a system of receipts to monitor registered articles from the point of acceptance to delivery. Only matter prepaid with postage at the First-Class Mail rates may be registered. For additional fees, return receipt and restricted delivery services are available.

Return Receipts

The return receipt is your proof of delivery. It is available on mail insured for more than \$25, and on certified, registered, COD, and Express Mail articles. The return receipt identifies who signed for the item and the date it was delivered. For an additional fee, you may get a receipt showing the exact address of delivery. Except for Express Mail service, you also can request restricted delivery service by which delivery is made only to the addressee or to someone who is authorized in writing to receive mail of the addressee.

Special Delivery

You can buy special delivery service on all classes of mail except bulk third-class. It pro-



vides for delivery, even on Sundays and holidays, during prescribed hours which extend beyond the hours for delivery of ordinary mail.

This delivery service is available to all customers served by city carriers and to other customers within a 1-mile radius of the delivery post office.

The purchase of special delivery does not always mean the article will be delivered by special messenger. Special delivery may be delivered by your regular carrier if it is available before he or she departs for morning deliveries. Call your post office about the availability of special delivery service.

Note: Make sure the mailing is endorsed Special Delivery.

Special Handling

Special handling service is available for third- and fourth-class mail only, including insured and COD mail. It provides for preferential handling in dispatch and transport, but does not provide special delivery.

The special handling fee must be paid on parcels that require special care such as baby poultry, bees, etc., except those sent at the First-Class Mail rate. Special handling does *not* mean special care of fragile items. Anything breakable should be packed with adequate cushioning and marked FRAGILE.

**SPECIAL
HANDLING**

**SPECIAL
DELIVERY**

**SPECIAL
HANDLING**

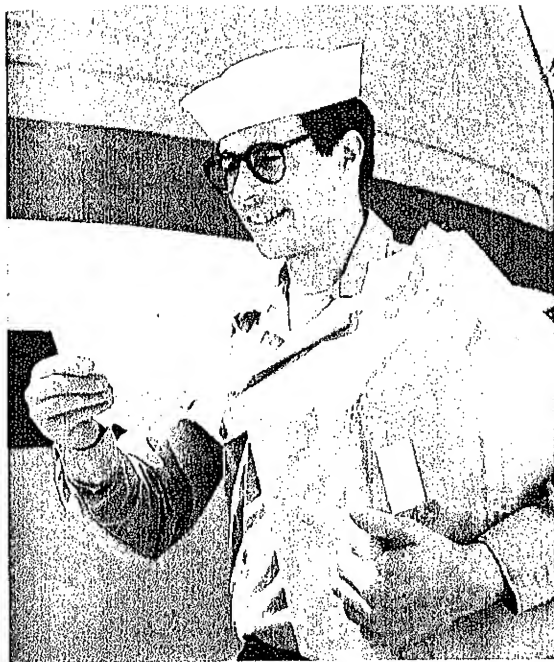
22 Customs

All mail originating in foreign countries and most United States territories is subject to U.S. Customs Service examination upon entering the United States. Many imported goods are subject to U.S. customs duty. When goods enter by mail, the duty assessed by Customs is collected by the Postal Service. The Postal Service also collects a customs clearance and delivery fee on each mail piece on which customs duty is paid. For customs information, write:

**UNITED STATES CUSTOMS SERVICE
TREASURY DEPARTMENT
PO BOX 7407
WASHINGTON DC 20229-7407**

INTELPOST

INTELPOST (International Electronic Post) service is an international facsimile message service available between the United States and several foreign countries. The original document and a transmittal form are scanned by a facsimile reader and transmitted via satellite. A black and white image of the document is printed in the destination country and delivered according to the service offerings available in the particular country and selected by the originating INTELPOST customer. Call your post office for further information.

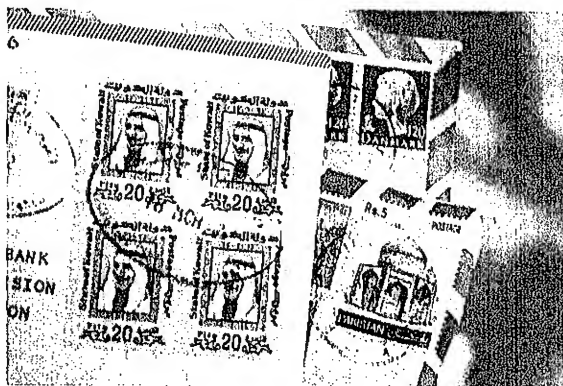


Airmail and surface mail can be sent to virtually all foreign countries. There are four types of international mail:

1. Letters and Cards—includes letters, letter packages, aerogrammes*, and post cards.
2. Other Articles—includes printed matter, matter for the blind, and small packets.
3. Parcel Post.
4. Express Mail International Service.

Registry service with limited indemnity protection is available for letters and cards and other articles to many countries. Insurance is available for parcel post to most countries. Check with your post office for specific information about the country to which you are mailing.

*An aerogramme is a lightweight stationery item that folds into a mailing piece and may bear imprinted postage. It is an economical and convenient form of letter mail for corresponding with people in foreign countries. Aerogrammes are available at any post office.



PAL (parcel airlift mail) and SAM (space available mail) are only for personal parcels and second-class publications mailed to military personnel overseas.

Packages up to 30 pounds and 60 inches in combined length and girth may be sent by PAL. PAL mail is flown to the military mail dispatch center where it becomes space available mail for airlift overseas. You pay the regular parcel post rate to the military mail dispatch center, plus a fee from 30¢ to \$1.20 for the air service, depending on weight.

Packages up to 15 pounds and 60 inches in combined length and girth may be sent by SAM at the regular parcel post rate to the military mail dispatch center. It is transported by surface in the United States and flown on a space available basis from the United States to the overseas destination.



26 Mail Fraud/Mail Order Problems

You can save time and money by ordering merchandise and conducting business transactions through the mail. If you are not aware of a company's reputation, check with the Better Business Bureau, Chamber of Commerce, or state or local consumer protection office before placing an order. If you later experience difficulty with the company or suspect that you have been the victim of a fraud or misrepresentation scheme, contact your postmaster or local postal inspector, or write:

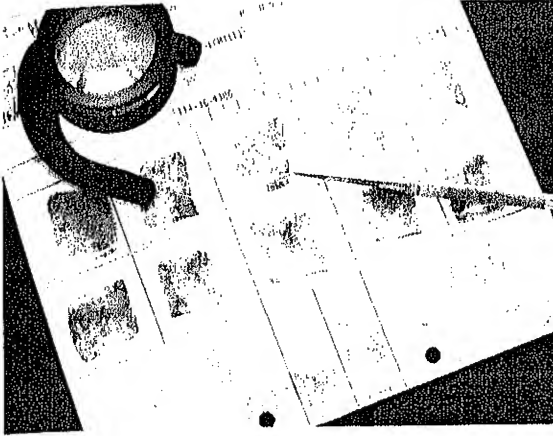
CONSUMER ADVOCATE
US POSTAL SERVICE
WASHINGTON DC 20260-6320

Information pamphlets on mail fraud are available at your local post office.

Pornography

You can stop the mailing of unsolicited sexually oriented advertisements to you by filling out a Form 2201, *Application for Listing Pursuant to 39 USC 3010*, at your local post office. Thirty days after your name has been added to the Postal Service reference list, any mailer who sends you sexually oriented advertisements is subject to legal action by the U.S. Government.

You also may stop the mailing of any further advertisements to you which you consider "erotically arousing or sexually provocative." Fill out Form 2150, *Notice for Prohibitory Order Against Sender of Pandering Advertisement in the Mails*, at your post office for this purpose.



28 **Passport Applications**

You can apply for a passport at about 950 postal facilities located nationwide. The passport is issued by Passport Services, U.S. Department of State. The passport fee may be paid in cash, or by check or money order. Call your post office for further information.

Personal Checks

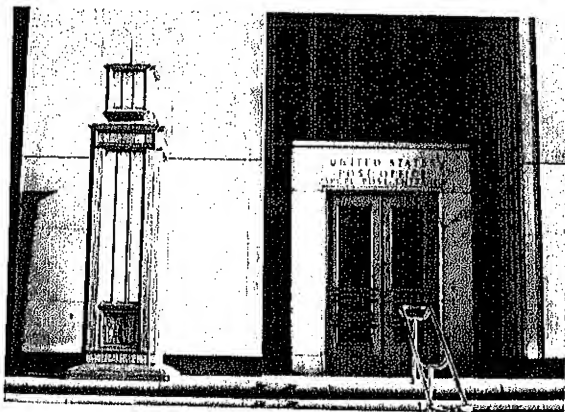
Except for the purchase of money orders, the post office may accept personal checks for payment of postal services and products up to the amount of purchase. You must show suitable identification. Make your check payable to the U.S. Postal Service or Postmaster.

Post Office Box and Caller Services

Post Office Box and Caller Services are available at many post offices for a fee. Box service provides privacy and allows you to get your mail any time the post office lobby is open. Caller (pickup) service is available during the hours post office retail windows are open. This service is for customers who receive a large volume of mail or those who need a box number address when no boxes are available. Call your post office for more information.

Postage Meters

When a mailer uses a postage meter, the postage, postmark, and date are imprinted at the



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mailer's place of business. Many mailers, including those with a relatively small mail volume, have found that this convenience more than offsets the costs of maintaining an account and of leasing the machine. Call your post office for more information.

Self-Service Postal Centers

Self-Service Postal Centers are at many locations throughout the country to provide basic postal services around the clock. You can mail letters and packages and buy stamps, postal cards, stamped envelopes, and minimum parcel insurance at Self-Service Centers. Some centers have a direct telephone line to the post office, which you can use to get mailing information or to request reimbursement for money lost in malfunctioning equipment. All stamps in Postal Service machines are sold at face value.

Stamps by Mail

You can buy postage stamps and stamped envelopes through the mail by using a *Stamps by Mail Order Form* available at your post office or from your letter carrier. A personal check or Postal Money Order made payable to U.S. Postal Service or Postmaster can be used to pay for the stamps.

Address the postage-paid order form envelope to your post office, enclose payment, and give it to your letter carrier, or drop it in any collection box.

30 Stamp Collecting—The World's Most Popular Hobby

Stamp collecting is a fascinating and enjoyable hobby that does not require any specific skills or expensive equipment. Almost any subject that interests you is shown on stamps.

A good starting point to begin your collection is your local post office, where new and recently issued stamps and postal stationery are on sale. You may also buy philatelic products, such as stamp collecting kits, the *Postal Service Guide to U.S. Stamps*, and mint sets of commemorative and special stamps for recent years. If these products are not available at your post office, order them by mail from:

**PHILATELIC SALES DIVISION
US POSTAL SERVICE
WASHINGTON DC 20265-9997**

For further information about stamp collecting and a free catalog, write:

**US STAMP INFORMATION SERVICE
PHILATELIC SALES DIVISION
US POSTAL SERVICE
WASHINGTON DC 20265-9987**



- ## ZIP + 4 Code

For more information about ZIP + 4 requirements and incentives, contact your local postmaster or customer service representative.



Publication 201, February 1985

Stocked at EASC/WASC. Postmasters may request additional copies on Form 7380, *Supply Center Requisition*.

In cooperation with the President's Office of Consumer Affairs, each postmaster has a copy of the *Consumer's Resource Handbook*, available for your review. It is designed to help consumers resolve complaints about goods and services with federal, state, and local agencies. If you want to obtain a personal copy, write to:

CONSUMER INFORMATION CENTER
DEPARTMENT 532
PUEBLO CO 81009

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